

(West Palm Beach)--- A total of 19 businesses attended Congressman Allen West's (R-FL) roundtable discussion today to listen and speak directly to Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Panel on Business Challenges within the Defense Industry Congressman Bill Shuster (R-PA) and Chairman of the House Committee on Small Business Congressman Sam Graves (R-MO). The discussion focused on breaking down the bureaucracy and red tape that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for small and medium-sized companies to successfully navigate the Defense Department's acquisition system and obtain contracts.

Congressman West is a Member of both the Armed Services Committee and Small Business Committee in the United States House of Representatives. As a Member of the HASC Panel on Business Challenges within the Defense Industry, he has a unique opportunity to address these concerns.

"Our small businesses are hurting and anxious to get to work where they are needed, and National Security can benefit from the innovative and competitive spirit that only small businesses can bring," West said. "In order to do this successfully, we need predictability, certainty and stability in the Defense industry "

Topics discussed today included: contract bundling, removing barriers to the Federal procurement process, and optimizing Department of Defense use of taxpayer dollars to help small businesses compete.

"We need to look at ways to make the Small Business Administration Office within the Department of Defense work more efficiently," Shuster said. "It is essential to find ways to make it easier for small businesses to obtain work with the federal government."

More than 1,000 South Florida businesses are currently seeking opportunities to offer their services to the federal government. The federal government spends half a trillion dollars on contracted goods and services and owes it to hardworking taxpayers to make sure their money is used wisely and efficiently. Government contracting offers a unique opportunity to invest in small businesses while also stimulating the economy. Small businesses created the majority of jobs, about 65 percent, over the last 17 years.

"I've been struggling for years trying to figure out a way to break in the world of defense contracts, knowing that I have a product the United States military may find useful," a small business owner who attended the event said. "After getting the opportunity to talk with both Chairman Shuster and Graves, I am confident I can now get the ball rolling to securing a federal contract, which is essential for my business. I appreciate Congressman West's willingness to hold such an event."

During the event, Representative Graves and Representative West discussed their cosponsored legislation, the Contractor Opportunity Protection (COP) Act. The Contractor Opportunity Protection Act provides more transparency in the contracting process, a stronger opportunity to appeal unjustified bundling, and the creation of a third party arbiter. See more on the legislation [here](#).

For pictures of the event, click [here](#).